

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 07643 232019Z

73

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 065897

O 232004Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1864

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7643

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, CY, LE, US, ASEC

SUBJECT: TERRORISM: LEBANESE GROUP DEMANDS FOR HOSTAGE RELEASE

REF: (A) NICOSIA 2946, (B) DEPARTMENT TELEXCON ITEM 16

1. OUR REACTION ON RECEIVING REFTEL A WAS THAT IT WAS A HOAX, PERPETRATED BY SOMEONE WHO IS MENTALLY ILL, FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

A. WE WERE AND ARE UNAWARE OF ANY AMERICANS MISSING IN LEBANON OR ELSEWHERE AND COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT 29 AMCITS AND 18 CITIZENS OF WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES COULD HAVE BEEN KIDNAPED HERE OR ELSEWHERE AND BE HELD HOSTAGE IN LEFTIST-CONTROLLED LEBANON WITHOUT THIS INFORMATION BECOMING KNOWN TO US. WE HAVE NOT, OF COURSE, CHECKED WHEREABOUTS OF EVERY AMERICAN CITIZEN STILL IN LEBANON, BUT ALLEGED NUMBERS OF HOSTAGES INVOLVED SEEM TO US TO MAKE THIS STORY INCREDIBLE.

B. RANSOM DEMANDED IS AN UNUSUAL AMOUNT WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE NO RELATION TO NUMBER OF HOSTAGES OR ANY RATIONAL EXPLANATION.

C. ASSERTION THAT HOSTAGES ARE BEING HELD IN THREE DIFFERENT PLACES IN LEFTIST-HELD TERRITORY IN LEBANON WHILE CONTACT WITH "JANE" AND PRESUMABLY MONEY TRANSFER
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 07643 232019Z

IS TO TAKE PLACE IN EAST BEIRUT IMPLIES AN OPERATIONAL

CAPABILITY WHICH IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE IN LEBANON TODAY. EVEN A MAJOR EXTREMIST CHRISTIAN, MUSLIM OR FEDAYEEN GROUP (WHICH WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS IS) WOULD BE STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT FOR OPERATIONAL ASSETS TO CARRY OUT SUCH AN OPERATION.

D. ALTHOUGH LETTER SAYS DEMAND IS TO BE RESPONDED TO WITHIN 48 HOURS OF ITS DELIVERY AT EMBASSY NICOSIA, SENDER COULD NOT KNOW WITH ANY DEGREE OF PRECISION EXACT TIME LETTER RECEIVED. IF DEMAND WERE SERIOUS, PERPETRATOR WOULD PRESUMABLY HAVE SET A PRECISE DATE (SEE PARA 4 BELOW).

2. IF THERE IS A POLITICAL INTENT IN THIS LETTER, IT MAY BE TO DAMAGE THE CHRISTIAN CAUSE. USE OF FRENCH TENDS TO INDICATE CHRISTIAN AUTHORSHIP AND JOUNIEH RETURN ADDRESS ON ENVELOPE, NEWSPAPERS TO BE USED, AND LOCATION OF JANE'S TELEPHONE CONTACT ARE ALL ASSOCIATED WITH CHRISTIAN-HELD LEBANON. ALLEGED PLACE OF DETENTION OF HOSTAGES, HOWEVER, IS OUTSIDE OF CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED TERRITORY, THUS PREVENTING INVESTIGATION BY CHRISTIAN AUTHORITIES.

3. FOR REASONS OUTLINED ABOVE WE ARE STILL INCLINED TO BELIEVE LETTER IS A MACABRE HOAX. HOWEVER, WE DID NOT RECOGNIZE SIGNIFICANCE OF MILDENHALL AND STROMFJORD AND DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE TO US.

4. WE HAVE JUST COME ACROSS ADVERTISEMENT FOR HAWANA TRAVEL AND TOURISM (EX-EAGLE) IN SEP 14 L'ORIENT-LE JOUR. HAWANA OFFERS FULL RANGE OF TRAVEL AGENCY SERVICES INCLUDING "DAILY POSTAL COURIER, TELEX AND TELEGRAPH SERVICE." ADDRESS IS JOUNIEH, PLACE CENTRALE, IMM. CHIHA, TEL 930845-934692; BYBLOS - RUE MAR YOUHANNA - IMM AKRA. HAWANA'S SLOGAN IS "TOUJOURS EN AVANT" (ALWAYS AHEAD). HAWANA IS APPARENTLY ONE OF THE MANY TRAVEL AGENCIES FACILITATING COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN CYPRUS AND CHRISTIAN-HELD LEBANON.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 07643 232019Z

LANE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, TERRORISTS, EXTORTION, THREATS, HOSTAGES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BEIRUT07643
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760359-1236
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760930/aaaaayyr.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 NICOSIA 2946
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <22 APR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TERRORISM: LEBANESE GROUP DEMANDS FOR HOSTAGE RELEASE
TAGS: PINS, ASEC, LE, US, CY, RHAIL, RON HAVLEN ARVOZEN INST LEBANON
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006